

METHAMPHETAMINE
INTOXICATION, DETOXIFICATION, WITHDRAWAL AND
TREATMENT

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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

1.) DEFINITIONS (ADAPTED FROM THE DSM-IV-TR)

- ❖ Intoxication
- ❖ Withdrawal
- ❖ Criteria for diagnosis of Substance Abuse
- ❖ Criteria for diagnosis of Substance Dependence

2.) METHAMPHETAMINE INTOXICATION

- ❖ Methods of use
- ❖ Symptoms of intoxication

3.) THE PROCESS OF DETOXIFICATION FROM
METHAMPHETAMINE

4.) WITHDRAWAL

5.) SHORT AND LONG TERM HEALTH HAZARDS OF
METHAMPHETAMINE

6.) TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

DEFINITIONS (ADAPTED FROM THE DSM-IV-TR)

INTOXICATION

The criteria necessary for a diagnosis of intoxication are:

- ❖ Development of a reversible syndrome due to recent ingestion of a substance
- ❖ Significant maladaptive behavior or psychological changes that are due to the effect of the substance on the CNS and develop during or shortly after use of a substance.

WITHDRAWAL

The criteria for diagnosis of withdrawal are:

- ❖ Development of a syndrome due to cessation of or reduction in substance use that has been heavy and prolonged
- ❖ The syndrome causes significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to significant impairment or distress as manifested by one or more of the following symptoms occurring within a 12 month period:

- ❖ Failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home
- ❖ Recurrent use in situations in which it is physically hazardous
- ❖ Recurrent substance related legal problems
- ❖ Continued use despite persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the substance

SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE

Defined as a maladaptive pattern of use leading to significant impairment or distress as manifested by 3 or more of the following occurring at any time in the same 12 month period:

- ❖ Tolerance: a need for increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or the desired effect or a diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the drug
- ❖ Withdrawal: experiencing the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance or the same or closely related substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms
- ❖ The substance is taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended
- ❖ There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use
- ❖ A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain, use or recover from the effects of the substance
- ❖ Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced due to substance use
- ❖ Continued use despite knowledge of having persistent physical or psychological problems likely caused or exacerbated by the substance

METHAMPHETAMINE INTOXICATION

METHODS OF USE

Meth can be:

- ❖ swallowed in pill or capsule form
- ❖ snorted into the nose
- ❖ smoked
- ❖ injected

As a powder, it can be mixed with water for injection, sprinkled on tobacco or marijuana and smoked. Chunks of clear, high purity meth, known as 'ice', "crystal" or "glass", resemble rocks and are smoked in a small pipe. The powdered drug can be spread on aluminum foil, heated with a lighter or torch and the fumes inhaled through a straw or pipe.

Oral ingestion – euphoria within 15 to 20 minutes

Snorting - produces effects within 3-5 minutes

Smoking or injecting – produces an immediate "rush" or "high"

Effects last from 4 to 24 hours duration

Methamphetamine use is characterized by increasingly frequent binges of use or "runs" of a day to several days duration

SYMPTOMS OF INTOXICATION

Behavioral

- ❖ Begins with a "high" feeling followed by euphoria
- ❖ Enhanced vigor and alertness
- ❖ Gregariousness, talkativeness, grandiosity
- ❖ Hyperactivity - "wired" "tweaked out"
- ❖ Restlessness and hypervigilance
- ❖ Interpersonal sensitivity or irritability
- ❖ Increase or decrease in sexual desire
- ❖ Anxiety, tension or nervousness
- ❖ Repetitive behaviors, repeating meaningless tasks
- ❖ Unpredictable, labile moods
- ❖ Anger and fighting or aggression
- ❖ Impaired judgment
- ❖ Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents
- ❖ Impaired social or occupational functioning
- ❖ Auditory, visual or tactile illusions (with intact reality testing)
- ❖ Disturbing skin sensations, "crank bugs", increased acne
- ❖ Compulsive jaw clenching or movements

Chronic intoxication may include blunting of affect, fatigue, sadness and social withdrawal

SYMPTOMS OF INTOXIFICATION (CONTINUED)

Physical

- ❖ Rapid or slow heart rate
- ❖ Dilated pupils
- ❖ Elevated or lower blood pressure
- ❖ Sweating or chills
- ❖ Nausea or vomiting
- ❖ Weight loss
- ❖ Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- ❖ Muscular weakness, spasms or tremors
- ❖ Respiratory depression
- ❖ Chest pain, pulse irregularities
- ❖ Insomnia
- ❖ Decreased appetite
- ❖ Confusion
- ❖ Extreme rise in body temperature
- ❖ Seizures
- ❖ Coma

THE PROCESS OF DETOXIFICATION FROM METHAMPHETAMINE

Detoxification is the process of ridding the body of the effects of methamphetamine and normalizing physical and behavioral function. The length of the process depends on the characteristics of the period of use and the physical condition of the user.

The most common symptoms are:

- ❖ Gradual reversal of pleasurable feelings induced by the drug
- ❖ Depressed mood
- ❖ Increased need for sleep, fatigue
- ❖ Anxiety and nervousness
- ❖ Increased appetite

WITHDRAWAL

Symptoms develop within a few hours to several days after cessation of or reduction in heavy and prolonged use of Methamphetamine.

- ❖ Dysphoric mood
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Vivid and unpleasant dreaming
- ❖ Insomnia or hypersomnia
- ❖ Increased appetite
- ❖ Psychomotor retardation or agitation
- ❖ Anhedonia – loss of interest and joy in life
- ❖ Drug craving
- ❖ “Crashing” – intense and unpleasant feelings of lassitude and depression
- ❖ Requires several days of rest and recuperation
- ❖ Evidence of weight loss
- ❖ Marked increase in appetite and rapid weight gain

Depressive symptoms may last several days to weeks and may be accompanied by suicidal ideation and feelings of hopelessness

SHORT TERM HEALTH HAZARDS

- ❖ Rapid increase in tolerance to the drug increasing the risk of dependence
- ❖ Alterations in brain chemistry and nerve endings
- ❖ Increased heart rate and blood pressure can cause irreversible damage to blood vessels in the brain, producing strokes
- ❖ Respiratory problems
- ❖ Irregular heartbeat, cardiovascular collapse and death
- ❖ Extreme loss of appetite and weight loss – anemia
- ❖ Increased risk of contacting and transmitting Hepatitis B and C, HIV and STD's
- ❖ High body temperature resulting in seizures and death
- ❖ Acute lead poisoning in contaminated Meth.
- ❖ Use in pregnancy can result in complications, premature delivery, low birth weight, altered infant behavior patterns including abnormal reflexes and extreme irritability, poor feeding, lethargy. Congenital deformities may be linked to Meth Use.
- ❖ Skin ulceration and infections
- ❖ Teeth grinding and dental problems –tooth decay, discolored teeth, gum disease
- ❖ Hair loss

LONG TERM HEALTH HAZARDS

- ❖ Dependence (addiction)
- ❖ Fatal kidney and lung disorders
- ❖ Brain damage
- ❖ Liver damage
- ❖ Blood clots
- ❖ Lowered resistance to illness
- ❖ Chronic depression, hallucinations, suicidal ideation
- ❖ Confusion
- ❖ Violent and aggressive behavior, rages, homicidal ideation
- ❖ Malnutrition
- ❖ Aged appearance
- ❖ Psychosis, paranoia, or schizophrenic-like mental disorders which may persist for months or years after use has ceased
- ❖ Progressive social and occupational dysfunction
- ❖ Incarceration
- ❖ Death

TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

Treatment for dependence of Methamphetamine is effective. People do recover and learn to live drug-free. Supportive medical interventions during acute detoxification and withdrawal and ongoing psychiatric care with antidepressant therapy is effective in early recovery. Issues that need to be addressed in treatment settings include modifying the users thinking, expectancies and behavior to increase skills in coping with life. 12 Step recovery groups offer long-term support and return to a drug free lifestyle.

If you have any additional questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact:

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